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USIB /IRAC-S-9.4/29

26 February 1975

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UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD
INTELLIGENCE RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEMORANDUM FOR THE UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD
THE INTELLIGENCE RESOURCES ADVISORY
COMMITTEE

SUBJECT : National SIGINT Plan

REFERENCES : a. USIB /IRAC-S-9.4/27, 12 February 1975,
limited distribution through restricted channels
b. USIB /IRAC-S-9.4/26, 16 January 1975,
limited distribution through special
channels
c. USIB /IRAC-S-9.4/28, 24 February 1975, limited
distribution through restricted channels

1. In restricted session of the joint USIB /IRAC meeting of 26 February with the Deputy Director, National Reconnaissance Office, in attendance, Mr. Colby invited comments on the National SIGINT Plan. Mr. Colby said that NSA had done a superlative job in pulling together a lot of complex material into a comprehensive plan. He did not mean to imply, however, that he or others necessarily agreed with everything in the plan, but he did believe that it was a major step forward and he wished to thank and applaud all those who worked on it.

2. In response, General Allen noted that the thrust of the plan was descriptive rather than issue oriented. He said it was most useful to NSA as an internal planning document and served as a basis for current program planning within the structure of resource decisions which are now taking place. Specifically, it has been used during the discussions of the program managers review process for the CCP. He said the plan is an indication of NSA's overall effort.

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3. Mr. Colby said that the plan did suggest one question in its relation to the CCP. Should it serve as a substitute for the program? General Allen believed that the plan should not serve as a substitute, but should serve as a basis for programming. He said the document, as such, is far more useful if it does not become a programming vehicle. To be a program document, it would require a great deal more detail and approval, which he thought would be a most difficult if not impossible task. Dr. Hall commented that General Allen had made an important distinction between the purpose of the plan and the programming process.

4. General Tighe said that DIA supported the concept of the NSP as well as the need for such plans in the human and photo areas.

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5. [REDACTED] expressed some concern regarding the relationship between the plan and the USIB-approved Five Year Guidance for the NRP. He said that unless care was exercised, it was possible that the two would be in conflict. Mr. Colby responded that this may not be a problem in the sense that it may help to identify issues and allow for discussion of alternatives.

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6. [REDACTED] endorsed Mr. Colby's comments regarding the high quality of the plan, but said that he had some concern for the next steps in the overall process, i.e., how do we get from where we are today to where the plan says we should be? How would the plan tie into and influence policy decisions downstream? He said that it was essential to tie resources into the process at some point, but agreed that this might not necessarily be done in one document. Mr. McAfee said that he liked the idea of a National SIGINT Plan and supported the suggestions in the OMB letter.

7. Mr. Collins commented that Treasury had some concerns regarding the treatment of economic needs. He said that one portion of the plan recognized the requirement for an increase in economic coverage, but there is an inference that more resources will not be applied until there is a better understanding of the economic requirements. Mr. Collins said that Treasury has learned from high-level economic customers, both in and out of the Treasury Department, that there is indeed a need for increased SIGINT coverage particularly in areas where the information is unique, such as information on the movement of petro dollars. [REDACTED] supported the Treasury view, noting the Director of OMB's personal interest. General Allen stated that he

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had been in consultation with the NIO for Economics on this question and that, since the plan had been published, the effort had increased somewhat. He said that he did not question the need, but had to examine the contribution or unique value of expensive COMINT to economic intelligence.

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8. General Walters congratulated General Allen on the plan, as did [redacted] added that the plan helps NSC consumers to know what is available in the SIGINT arena.

9. In response to Mr. Colby's invitation to address the SIGINT Committee paper, General Morrison noted that the SIGINT Committee commended the plan and felt that it would help the committee in its work. General Morrison reviewed each of the committee's recommendations as well as the follow-on actions which would be addressed by the committee. He concluded by suggesting that the USIB/IRAC note the NSP, concur in the SIGINT Committee assessment, and endorse the recommended changes and actions listed in paragraphs 7, 8 and 9 of the SIGINT Committee paper.

10. Dr. Hall agreed that the suggestions in the SIGINT Committee paper might be a good thing to do, but recommended that they be provided as general guidance to the Director, NSA, rather than being formally approved by the USIB and IRAC. He thought it would be useful to recognize the plan as DIRNSA's document for describing and providing visibility to the SIGINT system, but not as a mechanism for program decisions. He suggested that the plan, if tied down to program decisions, would lose its purpose.

11. The Chairman commented on [redacted] earlier point on the next steps. Since there are differences on some aspects of the plan, Mr. Colby suggested that the various agencies and the SIGINT Committee address this matter for the purpose of identifying major issues which could be considered in the resource review process. This should be done within the next few months in order to develop recommendations on which issues should be considered in the program cycle. This process would be one way of translating the plan into resource considerations. One problem was the issue raised by the JCS regarding how much direct support and SIGINT-related information should be included in the CCP as non-add items.

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Dr. Hall said he was happy to see this problem addressed in the NSP as long as it was not a program document. Mr. Colby agreed, but observed that this is an issue insofar as the JCS is concerned, and one that must be addressed. He understood the JCS concern that commanders in the field must have their intelligence assets, but suggested that advanced technology will inevitably lead to more centralization.

12. Another possible issue involved personnel and the closely-related problem of more qualified linguists. Mr. Colby suggested that more resources may become available by making better use of service reserve components. He observed that the linguists' problem involved the whole community, not just NSA. [redacted] commenting on his letter, said that the linguistic problem was significant and required more work. He again stressed his hope that, as the resources planning cycle evolves, it would be possible to use this document as one means of reviewing resources. As such, the current iteration of the NSP could serve as a test document for this purpose.

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14. General Allen stated his appreciation for the commendatory remarks made by the USIB/IRAC Principals. He said that more work was required on the plan, but noted that this first attempt had resulted in a coherent description. In the second iteration he said he would try to identify issues. He said NSA would now proceed on the next cycle; rather than re-drafting the current plan he would work toward the next iteration.

15. Mr. Colby suggested that the USIB and IRAC applaud the plan, note it, and that the members be requested to review the plan for the purpose of identifying major issues. Such issues should be submitted in time for consideration by USIB and IRAC in June.

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16. The USIB and IRAC:

- a. Noted the National SIGINT Plan;
- b. Agreed that the SIGINT Committee recommendations be provided to the Director, NSA, as guidance for his use as appropriate; and
- c. Agreed that USIB/IRAC members as appropriate and the SIGINT Committee would identify major issues resulting from the NSP and that these issues would be submitted to USIB and IRAC for consideration.



Executive Secretary

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